Saturday's Op Ed column

From: **Robert Armintor**
Sent: Sun 3/27/11 8:47 AM
To: Gazette Letters to the editor (opinion@gazette.com)

Thanks to the Gazette editorial board, and Seth Richardson, for Saturday's op ed piece "State Should Have Civil Unions Law." It was very well thought out, and deserves wide distribution.

As stated in the column both civil unions and marriages are actually contracts between two individuals, and the State should only be the recorder of that contract for inheritance purposes. The State should not be an enforcer of the views of any group seeking to deny persons the right of entering into such contracts. Religious groups may enforce their rules on their own members, but not on those who are of other faith traditions, or none at all. We must remember that the United States is a **civil society**, and it is not an adjunct to any religious group, nor subject to that group's beliefs or governing rules.

Thanks again for an excellent column.

Bob Armintor

OPINION 6T 3/26/11

OUR VIEW

STATE SHOULD HAVE A CIVIL UNIONS LAW

Marriage is sacred but won't be harmed

SB172 would create the right to a civil union in Colorado, giving any two unmarried adults substantially the same legal rights as married persons. The bill passed the Senate, but it faces an uphill battle in the House.

The bill should become law, and a stepping stone to a higher goal: to extract the state from regulating marriage at all.

As early as 1691, marriage laws were imposed for blatantly racist reasons. Miscegenation laws that barred marriages between whites and blacks became the genesis for modern marriage licensing. The Supreme Court overturned them

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The message is the same

Who took down the "Welcome Sign" in Colorado Springs? No wonder people from around the country aren't flocking to the foothills of Pikes Peak, Manitou Springs and Garden of the Gods. Twice within the last month, the Colorado Springs negative image of intolerance of "the gays" was vigorously reinforced.

Such an issue, these gays are, that Focus on the Family needs to know which potential city council person or mayor might sign a proclamation acknowledging "the gays'" observance of Stone Wall in the 1960s. Focus on the Family may not be related to Fred Phelps and his Kansas church, which pickets soldiers' funerals with anti-gay signs, but their message is the same.

Last week, following hours of debate in the state capital, a committee vote was made down party lines defeating the civic union legislation that would have afforded tax-paying citizens, teachers, lawyers, civic and political leaders — "gays" fundamental rights afforded to everyone.

The committee members who voted against the legislation may not be related to Focus on the Family, but their message is the same.

And who are these legislators listening to? Certainly not The Gazette, southern Colorado's largest newspaper, which on Mar. 26 wrote an opinion page editorial supporting civil unions.

The Denver Post wrote in a similar editorial, "We support gay marriage, and have opposed efforts to treat same-sex couples as if they're inferior to heterosexuals. But this bill, even though it creates a legal relationship that is similar to traditional marriage, does not confer all of the elements of marriage."

Who were the legislators listening to over the past two months, when reportedly more than 18,000 emails, calls and postcards were delivered to legislators in support of this measure? Who were Representative Bob Gardner, chair of the judiciary committee and representatives Mark Barker and Mark Waller listening to? According to a Denver Post article, Barker was listening to people from five years ago. He pointed out "voters in 2006 already spoke on the issue, voting against a civil-unions-type referendum..." And representatives Gardner and Waller, by voting the legislation down, simply chose not to represent all of the citizens living in Colorado Springs and El Paso County.

It was reported that if the legislation would have been released from the committee to the House floor, there were enough Republican votes for the bill to pass.

I challenge our local representatives to go on record why, with clear public and private support of the legislation, they chose not to listen.

Richard Blair
Colorado Springs